4: Durand G-3 (1888-92) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI
Durd AV3

What could be done with troops so treated? The men were well enough, and, poor wretches, looked eagerly to my coming to relieve them of their misery. Some of the officers were keen, but peculation and corruption were rampant; the honest men, if they existed, had no chance, and the condition of the force was deplorable.

If from the military point of view things were bad, from the civil they were no better. The Durbar was robbed by every official from the highest to the lowest; granaries that should have been full of good grain were empty, or full of rubbish substituted for a consideration, bribery and corruption ruled the land, disloyalty and treachery were in its high places. The man to send warning to the Hunza-Nagar forces, when after the capture of Chaprot they had advanced south and were besieging Nomal, the last Kashmir fort between them and Gilgit, of the advance of the Kashmir troops to its relief, was the Governor of Gilgit's right-hand man, Wazir Ghulam Haidar. Every one knew this, yet he was still employed and passed backwards and forwards between both sides, apparently the trusted servant of the Governor. A more villainous-looking scoundrel I never saw. He came one day, bringing the sons of the Raja of Nagar, who had come as ambassadors from their father, to see me. One of them had some years before been made Rá or Chief of Gilgit by the Durbar, the old line of chiefs having died out, and he having married the last surviving girl belonging to it. He had distinguished himself by bolting from Gilgit and leading the attack of the Nagar forces on Chaprot some months before. I thought

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV1

territory, or of attacking each other, and in weaving plots. Embassies passed from republic to republic, and from ruler to ruler, suggesting combinations and general risings. It was the custom of the country, and as a rule it meant but little, but this year, as the scraps of information from all sides reached me, and were collated and pondered over, it seemed to me that all tended to show that real mischief was brewing. The threads I held in my hands persistently wove themselves into one pattern, and that pattern meant war. 148 721

However, it was no business of mine to meet my troubles half way, and we went about our work as usual. Thinking it would do the troops good, I moved in April with a couple of guns and some infantry to Gakuch in Punyal, forty miles from Gilgit. The road I have described before; it was an education to the officers and men of the mule battery, and also taught the infantry much that was useful. The marches, short as they were, were very severe. The Governor of Gilgit and the Kashmiri General accompanied the party, of which I was very glad. We, of course, never left the troops, and saw them over the difficult pieces. I gave the men meat rations occasionally, and we saw to their comfort ourselves. This may seem not worth mentioning, but it was a revelation to the Kashmiri officers. Most of the regimental officers and the men were already with us, grateful for the increased comfort of their quarters, for the punctual issue of pay, and for the good quality of their rations, but one and all were unaccustomed to being cared for on the march by their superiors, and appreciated 702 703

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV1
Burusho AV7

the attention accordingly. Our little expedition had the best effect on the troops. On our return to Gilgit it was much discussed, and I heard with satisfaction that the Governor himself, in an assembly of the senior officers at his house, had pointed the moral. "Which of you," he said, "would have remained out in the sun on the march, and come into camp with the men? Not one. You would have all ridden on and made yourselves comfortable in camp, and left the men to look after themselves. It is the same all through; no wonder that the 'ikbal' (the fortune) of the English Government is great, and that they rule India."

In the beginning of May, as the snow was now melting and the forests were approachable, we began to fell timber, and to bring it down for the new quarters being built for the troops. The labour was very severe, for the mountain torrents were too violent to admit of floating logs down, and the whole of the wood had to be carried for ten miles by the men. The work was hardly completed by the autumn. We found good timber and a site for a summer camp a couple of hours' ride from my house, up a narrow valley at the head of which was a pass leading to Darel. I went up there one day in May to look at the timber, and to see if we could manage to erect a saw-mill, for we had nothing of the kind, and all sawing had to be done by hand. On my way down I heard that the expected storm had broken in Nagar.

The old chief of Nagar had a favourite son named Gauri Tham, who was married to the daughter of the Raja of Astor. I had met the boy there,